

The Times-Dispatch

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THE TIMES-DISPATCH, Richmond, Va.

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SUNDAY, MAY 15, 1904.

And Who Is My Neighbor?

Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir—In your editorial, "The White Man's Obligation," in your issue of April 25th, you term as oppositionists, and Professor Mitchell, in his Birmingham address as "Vandalisms," those who do not see any good coming to the negro and file by the present mode of educating the negro, and you go on to say that we "would keep the negro in subjection, and in a condition of virtual slavery to the white man," and without any assumption on the part of the white man of the protection of the negro, and intimate that we are unjust to the negro and this you think will revert upon the white race. In this expressing your views of our side of the controversy, you have done us an injustice, that we do not deserve; we would not be unjust to the negro; would treat him right, and so far as the feeling towards him in this section is concerned, it is altogether friendly, as long as he behaves himself. But we contend, and we think it is to the credit of the white man, that we do not mean by "keeping him in subjection," that we would deny him the realization of this wild dream, and the yet more prosperous one of social equality, and negro supremacy, we plead guilty to the charge, and think it is a great deal better to be honest and frank with them, letting them know even for all that this ambition, which at heart is their ultimate hope, is never to be attained in this world. It appears that the great difference in our treatment of the negro's education, in this controversy, and we are both sincere in wishing to better his condition, is that one side is educating him as if he were an Anglo-Saxon, while the other side educates him as if he were a negro. The negro of the race fixed there by their Creator, which man is powerless to change. This misguided Northern idea of forcing the negro to an equality with the white man was started by the abolitionists, but it is fast learning, his nature. Is it for the negro's good to continue this teaching, to create hopes that must be dashed to the ground and cause him untold dangers? We answer, No. With his present education, he is leading him? What callings in life is it opening for the rank and file to make an honest living? We have shown in a former article that it is depriving him of earning a living as a laborer, although he made an ideal one, by his entering the vain hope of living without working between the plow handles. If the other side claims that is worse than slavery for him to work there, we ask and wait for an answer, who is going to take that place? Somebody is going to fill it. There is no slavery attached to it, either. He could earn sufficient wages to make a comfortable living, and be contented and happy, but the little grinding of book learning that he is getting is driving him from the farm, too proud to work, to the cities, where he is a terror to every lady who ventures out alone, and where he is a constant, though unwilling, attendant of the Police Court. Is this better condition? We, the farmers and taxpayers, who are paying for his schooling, can see no good results from the methods now pursued, and should we be blamed for complaining when it looks as if we were paying for removing the support upon which the fabric of our agriculture rests. We contend that there is no opening for the vast majority of negroes to make an honest living except as laborers, and when you destroy his usefulness as a laborer, you do him incalculable harm, which is not only felt by him, but by all kinds of business. And again, he asks: "If we educate the negro, who is going to take his place as a laborer?"

There you have the proposition frankly stated. The negro must be kept in subjection; must be deprived of the right of schooling, in order that he may work for the white man. Mr. Beverly says that he waits for an answer to his question. We ask him another question. If the negroes had never been brought here, or if they should now be removed, who would do the work of the white man? Upon Mr. Beverly's theory there must be a laboring class, and some men would have to be deprived of the right to improve their condition in order that there might be farm hands and butlers and cooks. We protest against any such cruel and undemocratic doctrine. We protest against keeping any man in subjection and depriving him of opportunity in order to make him the servant of another man. That question comes home to the white man, as well as to the negro, and we resent the suggestion in whatever form it may arise, because it comes home to us.

There has always been a serving class, without respect to race, and perhaps there always will be. But in God's name and in the name of democracy, we insist that every man in this country shall have the opportunity to lift himself out of that class and improve his situation in life. If a man is able to gain a livelihood by doing brain work instead of manual work, it is cruel and undemocratic and un-Christianlike to hold him down to the position of a common laborer.

Mr. Beverly brings the discussion down to a low level indeed when he puts the negro in the same class with beasts of burden. We cannot discuss that phase of the subject with him, because we recognize the negro as a human being and not as a beast. But he is illogical even in that view. Intelligent stock raisers do all that they can to improve the breed of their stock, and any stock raiser would be a poor business man indeed if he neglected the opportunity to convert work horses, no matter what the breed, into fancy driving and race horses. If such a man had a mule that was capable, under training, of trotting a mile in less than two minutes, he would be foolish to keep that mule at the plow. For our part, we are willing to give the mule a chance.

The point is that, taking even the business view, it is sensible for the American people to educate the children of the land without regard to race, in order that the breed may be improved.

But Mr. Beverly says that educating the negro does not improve him, but makes him worse. Yet later on con-

of to-day is a far greater menace to society and civilization than the one we started this education; poor encouragement in that direction.

The solution of this problem is the burning question of the day and in the interest of the white man and the negro worthy of the best efforts of the best minds. The white man has to solve it, as this is and always will be, his country. Let us throw aside sentiment, and work for something practical. Teach the rank and file to be efficient laborers, as this must necessarily be their life work, and this will be a benefit to them and to the community, in which they live. So long as they are taught by teachers of their race, hostility to the white man, just so long will they be the chief sufferers from such teaching. If there are some who can succeed in the profession, let them go ahead; the way is clear, but it is wrong and worse than useless to make fools of the rank and file by teaching them or holding out hopes to them that they can live without working for it.

ROBERT BEVERLY.

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traditions himself by saying that if there are some negroes who can succeed in the professions, let them go ahead. But how are they going to succeed in the professions and go ahead if they have no opportunity for education? Taking him at his own word, all negroes should have a chance to educate themselves and improve themselves, and let the fittest survive. Those who cannot with an education make a living except as common laborers must get their living by the sweat of their brow. But those who can make a living in the professional life or in any field of commerce or industry should have a chance to do so.

Again, Mr. Beverly contradicts himself when he says: "Let us be fair; the negro is a slave; he has the option of the whole world to work out his salvation." That is all that we ask for him. Every informed reader of this paper knows that the Times-Dispatch is opposed to coddling the negro and to giving him any special consideration on account of his race. We contend simply that he shall be given a fair chance, and he cannot have a fair chance if he be denied the right of education.

Mr. Beverly says that history fails to give an incident of or any names of people who have ever risen except through their own effort. We do not expect the negro to rise in any other way. We have always fought the Northern idea of making him the "ward of the nation," and giving him favors of government not enjoyed by others. But, to repeat, we are in favor of giving him the opportunity to raise himself up by his own exertion.

In conclusion, let us say once again that our concern is not for the negro race, but for the white race. This doctrine that one man ought to be held down in order that he may be the servant of another man is dangerous to democracy; it is dangerous to American liberty; and it is dangerous to the white man, as it is to the negro. Taking the higher view still, we contend that the white race cannot be unjust and cruel to the black race without harming itself. A wrong is subjective as well as objective. The man who is wronged may recover from the evil inflicted; the man who does the wrong receives a permanent injury to himself.

True Charity.

The Virginia State Conference of Charities and Correction will convene in Norfolk on Tuesday next, and an interesting and instructive session is promised. This conference is merely a propaganda. It does not meddle. The men and women who compose it are students of the subject of charity, and in coming together from time to time their aim is by study and discussion to work out the best and most beneficial methods of dealing with beggars and dependents and charitable institutions.

The fundamental principle upon which the conference operates is that true charity never degrades, but always lifts up and helps. Those who have had the largest experience are convinced that haphazard alms-giving usually does more harm than good, tending to make the beggar more dependent, and so aiding and encouraging him in his degradation. This conference endeavors to correct the evils of such alms-giving and to direct in the right way those who are disposed to give. There are many beggars who ought not to be encouraged, because they are impostors and are leading a dishonest life. There are other beggars who do not mean to be dishonest, but who have reached the conclusion that they must live upon the bounty of others. These should be encouraged to help themselves and to become independent. There are still others who are unable to take care of themselves, for one cause or another, and they must be cared for at the public expense. But there is a right way and a wrong way of doing this sort of charity work, and one of the chief aims of the conference is to make suggestions to the State, county and city authorities as to the best methods of conducting charitable institutions.

The conference keeps in touch with men in various parts of the country who have made a study of charity and have reduced it to something like a science. Several of these experts are invited to address the conference from time to time, and the members have always been instructed and edified by such addresses. The conference this year will in that respect be no exception. In a word, this conference is one of the educational institutions of the State and is doing a splendid work in its peculiar sphere.

Novel City Government.

In these columns we have frequently alluded to municipal corporations as business corporations, in which the citizens constitute the stockholders, members of the Council the board of directors, and the Mayor the president. That would be a low view to take of national or State government, for government performs very much higher functions than those of business. But a municipal corporation deals very little with the fundamental principles of government, and its operations are confined largely to business functions.

The city of Memphis, so we are informed, is a strictly business corporation. Twenty years ago it effaced itself from the list of American municipalities and became for a time a mere "taxing district." The city has now, however, evolved for itself a form of government which is, as we have said, strictly business. The municipal corporation is run much the same as railroad and other corporations are run—by a board of directors, of which the Mayor is president. There are no Councils, no ward representations. The entire affairs of the city are in the hands of the eleven directors, of which the Mayor is one. These govern the city in all its departments.

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Headache Earache Toothache

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will quickly drive out the pain. Keep it on hand for just such emergencies. There is sure to be some time of need and Hamlin's Wizard Oil will not fail you.

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